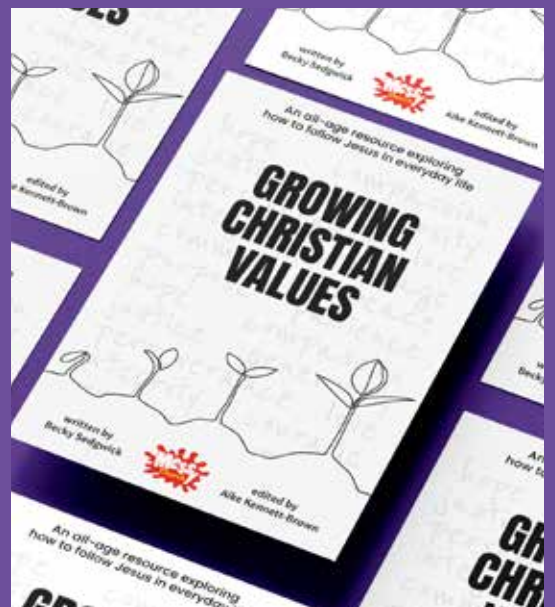


Messy!



003

CONTAINS TWELVE MESSY CHURCH SESSIONS
INCLUDING CHRISTMAS AND EASTER



VOL. 3

Growing christian values



gMessy!

We are grateful for funding received from the Church of England's FLOURISH initiative, enabling partnerships between schools and their local churches, aiming to engage a large number of children, young people, and their families in worshipping communities based in schools.



Flourish



**National Society
for Education**

Church of England & Church in Wales



BRF Ministries

15 The Chambers, Vineyard, Abingdon OX13 3FE
+44 (0)1865 319700 | brf.org.uk

The Messy Church® name and logo are registered trade marks of Bible Reading Fellowship, a charity (233280) and company limited by guarantee (301324), registered in England and Wales

EU Authorised Representative: Easy Access System Europe – Mustamäe tee 50, 10621 Tallinn, Estonia, gpsr.requests@easproject.com

ISBN 978 1 80039 333 2

First published 2025

All rights reserved

This edition © Bible Reading Fellowship 2025

Acknowledgements

Scripture quotations marked with the following abbreviations are taken from the version shown. NCV: the New Century Version®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ICB: The Holy Bible, International Children's Bible® Copyright© 1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Tommy Nelson™, a division of Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. MSG: *The Message*, copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. NIV: The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. NLT: The Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Subeditor: Becca Turnbull

Designer: Ben Bloxham

Proofreader: Daniele Och

Cover photos: © BRF Ministries

Internal photos: © BRF Ministries. Activity photos © session writers.

Printed and bound in the UK by Zenith Media NP4 0DQ

Photocopying for churches

Please report to CLA Church Licence any photocopy you make from this publication. Your church administrator or secretary will know who manages your CLA Church Licence.

The information you need to provide to your CLA Church Licence administrator is as follows:
Title, Author, Publisher and ISBN.

If your church doesn't hold a CLA Church Licence, information about obtaining one can be found at uk.ccli.com.

Photocopying of any part of this magazine is otherwise not permitted. Additional print or digital copies can be purchased at brfonline.org.uk/getmessyvol3.

To order back issues of *Get Messy!* and other Messy Church resources, email BRF Ministries at enquiries@brf.org.uk or telephone +44 (0)1865 319700.

Send in news, stories, photos and general enquiries to our Messy Church administrator on +44 (0)1235 858238 or messychurch@brf.org.uk.

What is Messy Church?

It's church, but not as you know it.

Every month thousands of people of all ages come together to discover Jesus, including those who've never been to church before. In over 30 countries around the world, we eat, play and worship together. Expect activities, songs and prayers and an entirely new way to express your faith.

Look out for the following symbols by activities, which give you extra materials and more!



SUPPORT MATERIAL

This symbol means you can go to messychurch.org.uk/getmessyvol3-3332 to download templates at A4 size, including a session planning sheet.



MESSY CHURCH AT HOME

Activities with this symbol can be used for 'take-home' ideas, to continue the God-conversation between Messy Church gatherings.



MESSY CHURCH GOES WILD

This symbol shows activities that work well for Messy Church Goes Wild sessions. See messychurch.org.uk/goeswild for more ideas.

07 AIKE WRITES

09 SEPTEMBER
HOPE: PUTTING YOUR TRUST IN GOD

14 OCTOBER
COMPASSION: 'BEING KIND TO ALL PEOPLE'

21 NOVEMBER
PEACE: HOW CAN I BE A PEACEMAKER?

26 DECEMBER
JOY: TO THE WHOLE WORLD!

31 JANUARY
PERSEVERANCE: FOLLOWING JESUS
TAKES PRACTICE

37 FEBRUARY
LOVE: HOW DOES THIS GROW?

42 MARCH
INTEGRITY: STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

47 APRIL
COURAGE: TO FOLLOW JESUS

52 MAY
COMMUNITY: A HOME FOR ALL

57 JUNE
PURPOSE: WHAT AM I TO DO?

62 JULY
JUSTICE

67 AUGUST
PATIENCE: WAIT FOR IT!

Aike writes...



Welcome to Get Messy! Volume 3

This resource contains twelve session outlines for Messy Churches. We are delighted to work in partnership with FLOURISH, the Church of England initiative to plant new worshipping communities in schools. This volume takes a thematic approach, looking at Christian values and way of life, often covered by school Collective Worship in the UK, enabling Messy Churches that meet in schools to cover the same topic, but with the entire family.

With themes of hope, compassion, peace, perseverance, love, integrity, purpose, justice and patience, Messy Churches can explore values that underpin a Christian way of life. This is the perfect follow-on material to *Get Messy! Volume 2: Christian basics made messy*.

The material also includes the key Christian festivals through the lens of the following values: Christmas – joy; Easter – courage; and Pentecost – community.

If you work in a school setting and are looking for Collective Worship material, we recommend the BRF Resource Hub, a one-stop shop for free tried-and-tested ideas from over 20 years of working in primary RE (Barnabas in Schools). To help save time, we've created a webpage at messychurch.brf.org.uk/flourish/brf-resource-hub-get-messy-topics listing Collective Worship and classroom ideas that complement each *Get Messy! Volume 3* session.

As part of the FLOURISH initiative, iSingPOP, Out of the Ark Music and Nick and Becky Drake (Worship for Everyone) have provided song suggestions for each session. Out of the Ark Music have even created a webpage (outoftheark.com/messychurch), kindly gifting us their song suggestions all in one place. We hope all ages enjoy learning new worship songs together. You can find out a little about each music group on the next page.

We have a special treat in store for January's 2026 session on 'perseverance'. Our Australian Messy friends have worked in partnership with Andrew McDonough, creator of 'Cecil the lost sheep'. Andrew has created a webpage, accessible via a QR code, so that Messy Churches can download PowerPoint slides of his story to use during the celebration – amazing!

How to use Get Messy!

Other than the key Christian festivals: Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, the sessions are standalone, so can be done in any order. Feel free to choose topics that are most suitable for your context.

Remember that any resource is a springboard for you to creatively adapt ideas for your Messy Church. If the themes in this edition are not the right fit, we have a massive back catalogue of resources available on the Messy Church website (messychurch.brf.org.uk/resources/messy-church-sessions-themes).

We suggest you start your planning meeting by praying and reflecting on where you noticed God at work in your previous session. Perhaps there were 'God conversations' that might need following up? Then read the Bible together and be curious about which words or verses stand out. This will help your team talk about the key Bible themes that you wish to share during the activity time and provides you with a fantastic opportunity for team discipleship. You'll find a choice of ten activities, designed for a range of ages, abilities and spiritual styles, with both indoor and Messy Church Goes Wild (outdoor) suggestions. Remember you don't have to do them all! As we continue to work towards more eco-friendly activities, try to reduce your waste, reuse what you already have in the back of your church cupboard and think about how any craft items can be recycled after Messy Church.

In the 'Add value' section, we've included discussion starter mealtime cards, designed to keep the conversation flowing when you gather to eat. The social action idea can help your Messy Church be church throughout the month. In the 'Celebration' section you'll find ideas to retell the Bible story in an engaging way, together with a prayer, plus song and meal suggestions.

Huge thanks go to our writers who have taken time to create and test-drive these sessions, especially those who are writing for the first time.

If you want to keep up to date with Messy Church news, blogs and training events, sign-up to our monthly e-newsletter (messychurch.brf.org.uk/newsletter) and follow us on social media.

Visit messychurch.org.uk/getmessyvol3-3332 to download all sorts of extra content for these sessions, including support material, photos, table signs, mealtime cards and a planning template!



Messy Church-BRF



@messychurch



@MessyChurchBRF



@MessyChurchBRF



@MessyChurchBRF

Session material: September

Hope: putting your trust in God

by Trish Hahn



SUPPORT MATERIAL



MESSY CHURCH AT HOME



MESSY CHURCH GOES WILD

Bible story for prep

Jeremiah 29:1–14 (NCV)

This is the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the elders who were among the captives, the priests, and the prophets. He sent it to all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had taken as captives from Jerusalem to Babylon. (This letter was sent after all these people were taken away: Jehoiachin the king and the queen mother; the officers and leaders of Judah and Jerusalem; and the craftsmen and metalworkers from Jerusalem.) Zedekiah king of Judah sent Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. So Jeremiah gave them this letter to carry to Babylon:

This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says to all those people I sent away from Jerusalem as captives to Babylon: 'Build houses and settle in the land. Plant gardens and eat the food they grow. Get married and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons, and let your daughters be married so they also may have sons and daughters. Have many children in Babylon; don't become fewer in number. Also do good things for the city where I sent you as captives. Pray to the Lord for the city where you are living, because if good things happen in the city, good things will happen to you also.' The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: 'Don't let the prophets among you and the people who do magic fool you. Don't listen to their dreams. They are prophesying lies to you, saying that their message is from me. But I did not send them,' says the Lord.

This is what the Lord says: 'Babylon will be powerful for seventy years. After that time I will come to you, and I will keep my promise to bring you back to Jerusalem. I say this because I know what I am planning for you,' says the Lord. 'I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future. Then you will

call my name. You will come to me and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will search for me. And when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me! I will let you find me,' says the Lord. 'And I will bring you back from your captivity. I forced you to leave this place, but I will gather you from all the nations, from the places I have sent you as captives,' says the Lord. 'And I will bring you back to this place.'

Pointers

- The nation of Judah turned away from God and sought protection from pagan nations (Assyrians, Egyptians and Babylonians). God's people were in exile in Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon) had captured Jerusalem.
- The people of Judah were in desperate need of guidance from God as they lived in exile.
- God chose the prophet Jeremiah to deliver God's message.
- Jeremiah's message was challenging and not well received by most people.
- Jeremiah urged the people to return and seek God with all their heart and obey God's commands.
- God revealed through Jeremiah that God had a plan and purpose for the prosperity of God's people, even when their situation was looking hopeless.

How does this session help people grow in Christ?

This session helps people realise that God has a plan and purpose for each of us. Regardless of our current situation, God can work through it to give us hope. We can rely on God if we build a personal relationship with God, encouraged by being part of a Christ-centred community, especially during tough times. God says when we search for God with all our heart, we will find God (vv. 12–14).

- The story of Ruth is a great one to read during the season of Harvest. We see Boaz and his household gleaning and gathering their harvest from the fields and making sure that when they do so they don't hoard it all for themselves but share it with those who are in need – in this case Ruth. Ruth is not only given the spare grain, but she is also given shelter where she can rest (Ruth 2:7, 12), water (Ruth 2:9), kindness (Ruth 2:10) and food (Ruth 2:14).
- The compassion shown to Ruth gives her hope and safety during a very difficult time in her life. She is a foreigner in a strange land, a long way away from her home. She is a widow, having lost her husband unexpectedly, and she is in need financially.
- The work of the charity Street Child is a modern example of people working together to help the world's most vulnerable children. Street Child works in over 25 countries to help those who have been affected by war, natural disasters and poverty. It provides safe spaces for children to play and be given the care they need. Like Boaz, Street Child helps people in the toughest of circumstances, providing shelter, kindness, vital resources and education.

How does this session help people grow in Christ?

This session will help people explore the importance of giving from our excess. The session will explore themes of sharing, kindness, compassion, generosity and social action as modelled by Boaz in Ruth 2, and it will introduce the work of the charity Street Child.

Add value

Mealtime card

- What resources do we have plenty of and how can we share them?
- How else can we be generous and kind?
- How can we look out for those who are most vulnerable?
- What could we do to support the work of Street Child?

Question to start and end the session

So... how can we be generous and kind to those in need around us and across the world?

Social action idea

Can you arrange a fundraising event with your friends, family or community to raise money for Street Child so that they can help people in need? This is an opportunity to be creative and proactive. FUNdraising can be FUN!

How about a sponsored football match, bake sale, fashion show or concert? Street Child's colour is orange, so you could have an orange-themed party to help raise awareness. Contact churches@street-child.org for stickers, posters, bunting and more. Alternatively, you could discuss and pray about who else you might like to bless with the gift of your fundraising – it could be a local charity.

Activities

1



1. Build an indoor den/shelter

You will need: large household objects and furniture (e.g. chairs, coffee tables, boxes, clothes airer); blankets; pillows/cushions; rugs; pegs; string; lantern/torch

In the story of Ruth, Ruth rests in a shelter provided by Boaz. As a group, work together to build a shelter using the resources around you. What makes a good shelter? Be creative in making a strong, useable and nice/fun place for someone to rest.

Talk about what would have made Ruth feel safe, comfortable and looked after in the shelter provided by Boaz.

I wonder... what things would make you feel safe if needing to shelter in an emergency? Street Child provides safe places for children to be in a variety of global emergencies (e.g. safe play spaces in refugee camps and school buildings in remote regions).

2. School building with Street Child

You will need: box of Lego/Duplo (alternatively, other construction toys such as wooden bricks, junk modelling); a life-size building brick to use as a prop (optional); messy material to make a life-size brick (e.g. mud or clay mixed with straw/sand/gravel, or use playdough for a less messy version)

4. World prayer for peace

You will need: copies of the World Council of Churches prayer from 1983 which can be found online (oikoumene.org/resources/documents/prayer-for-peace); pens; pencils

This prayer was written by the World Council of Churches, which brings together churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 120 countries and territories throughout the world, representing over 580 million Christians and including most of the world's Orthodox churches, scores of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed churches, as well as many United and independent churches. Can you illustrate it? Use whatever you like...

Alternatively, can you write a poem about peace?

Talk about how on 11 November people in the UK and elsewhere often wear poppies to remember those who have died during conflicts and wars. Do you know why poppies were chosen as a symbol?

I wonder... do you have a family story about what happened during a war?

5. Emoji biscuits

You will need: plain biscuits (sweet or savoury); assorted cut-up fruit and vegetables; pretzels, mini breadsticks, etc.

Remember to risk assess for allergies and intolerances.

Can you make a happy face on your biscuit? Can you make it sad? Can you make it angry? Can you make an emoji for someone who is feeling at peace?

Talk about how you feel today. Why do our emotions change? What emotions might someone experiencing conflict feel? Tell me about your peace emoji – what did you do? What emotions did Jesus experience? (Remember, Jesus wept when his friend Lazarus died and he got angry in the temple.) How can Jesus help us?

I wonder... is it possible to be happy all the time?

6



6. Peace dove with happy faces

You will need: magazines; a large piece of paper; pens; glue; scissors

First, draw a large dove outline on the piece of paper (you can copy one from online to make this easier). Then, from the magazines find pictures of people smiling and stick them on to the large dove.

Talk about what would make the world a better place. How can you make your part of the world (your home, your classroom, your office or place of work) a more peaceful and happier place?

I wonder... what difference could a smile make to someone you meet? Do you think God smiles at you?

7



7. Shaving foam marbling

You will need: shallow trays; cans of shaving foam; food colouring (that can be dripped one drop at a time); cocktail sticks; paper (or card); a shower scraper; access to a sink for washing hands

Soap cleans things – dishes, clothes, our hands and more. Shake the can of shaving foam and spray carefully in a thin layer on to the tray. Add drops of different food colourings on to it. Swirl with a cocktail stick. Place a sheet

Celebration

Today, we're celebrating the most incredible gift ever given: Jesus Christ. His birth is not just a story; it is the fulfilment of God's promise of love, a gift that brings joy to the entire world. Let's explore what this means!

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about Christmas? *Allow for responses – perhaps they mention family, gifts, traditions or joy.*

Let's take a moment to consider how the joyous Christmas story began for Mary, Jesus' mother. In Luke 1, we meet her when she is visited by the angel Gabriel. *Read Luke 1:26–38 aloud.*

When the angel appeared to Mary, what were the first words spoken? 'Rejoice, favoured one! The Lord is with you!' This is a message of joy. Even though Mary was troubled and unsure, God's message was clear: God's plan was one of hope and joy, for her and for the whole world. Mary was chosen to carry Jesus, and her 'yes' brought the beginning of joy to the world.

What do you think Mary felt when the angel told her this news? What would you have felt?

Encourage participants to discuss their answers in small groups. If time permits, allow for groups to share their responses.

The joy of Jesus' birth isn't just for Mary or even just for the people of Israel. It's for the whole world! In John 3:16, we hear how big God's love is. Let's read this verse together. I'll start, and you can join in. *Read John 3:16 together. If possible, have the verse visible on a poster/display at the front of the room.*

This very important piece of scripture tells us the 'why' of Christmas. Jesus is God's ultimate gift of love. He was sent to bring joy, not just to a few, but to everyone, everywhere. Jesus' birth is the beginning of that joy – because it brings salvation, hope and love to the world.

This joy that we've been talking about isn't meant to stay with us; it's meant to be shared. Just like Mary shared the joy of Jesus with the world, we are called to share that joy too. Christmas reminds us that God's love is for everyone, and our response should be to reflect that love and joy in our lives.

How can we bring the joy of Jesus to others, especially during the Christmas season?

Invite people to share their ideas. Suggestions might include acts of kindness, service or sharing their faith with others.

Jesus' birth is more than just a holiday event; it's the fulfilment of God's promise of love. This is why we celebrate Christmas with joy. As we sing, share and give during this season, let's remember the joy that came into the world through Jesus – joy that brings hope, love and salvation to all who believe.

Let's take a moment to think of someone in your life who needs the joy of Jesus. Think of ways that you can share God's love with them this week. Let's pray and ask God to help us spread the joy of Christ this Christmas season.

I wonder...

- How the world would be impacted if all people challenged themselves to spread joy this Christmas season?
- Who most needs to hear a message of joy this Christmas season?
- What can you do to spread joy in your own part of the world?

Prayer

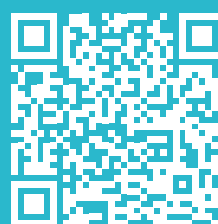
God of joy, thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus. As we celebrate his birth, help us to carry this joy into the world, sharing your love with everyone we meet. Amen.

Song suggestions

- 'Joy to the world'
- 'Angels we have heard on high'
- 'Hark! The herald angels sing'
- 'A child in a manger born' – Mark and Helen Johnson (Out of the Ark Music)
- 'Hear the bells' – Nick and Becky Drake (Worship for Everyone)
- 'The gift' – iSingPOP

Meal suggestions

Create a menu that includes different foods from around the world or that features foods enjoyed by Christians around the world at Christmas, such as: barbecue (Australia and South Africa), roast turkey (United States), roast goose (Great Britain and Germany), a julbord, which includes cold cuts, fish, sausage and cheese (Sweden), tamales (Mexico) and yule log cake (France).



Scan to download
the PDF support
material from our
website



Session material: January

Perseverance: following Jesus takes practice

by Greg Ross with illustrations by Andrew McDonough



SUPPORT MATERIAL



MESSY CHURCH AT HOME



MESSY CHURCH GOES WILD

Bible story for prep

Luke 15:1–7 (MSG)

By this time a lot of men and women of questionable reputation were hanging around Jesus, listening intently. The Pharisees and religion scholars were not pleased, not at all pleased. They growled, ‘He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends.’ Their grumbling triggered this story.

‘Suppose one of you had a hundred sheep and lost one. Wouldn’t you leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the lost one until you found it? When found, you can be sure you would put it across your shoulders, rejoicing, and when you got home call in your friends and neighbours, saying, “Celebrate with me! I’ve found my lost sheep!” Count on it – there’s more joy in heaven over one sinner’s rescued life than over ninety-nine good people in no need of rescue.’

Pointers

Some people think that if they choose to follow the way of Jesus, their life will be simple and easy. The stories of the first followers of Jesus in our Bibles teach us that those first women and men heard a lesson and then had a chance to put the lesson into practice. Many times they failed or made mistakes or doubted and questioned Jesus’ teaching. Then they had to go back and keep practising again and again. All through history the people of God have shared this reality in stories, song, prayers and art-work as ways to keep encouraging new followers to keep on going and not to give up when it gets hard or they make mistakes, to persevere.

How does this session help people grow in Christ?

This session is designed to help people of all ages learn that following the way of Jesus requires lots of practice. This means having a go, failing sometimes, having another go and learning better ways, and keeping on. In other words, living the way of Jesus requires perseverance, and it’s better shared in a group or community.

Add value

Mealtime card

- Share one thing that you have had to do lots of practice to be good at. It might be tying your shoe laces or a craft or sport or learning an instrument or something else.
- Share a story about your favourite party that you have been to. What made it feel so special that you remember it?
- What do you know about sheep, shepherds and sheep dogs in your country?

Question to start and end the session

So... who has showed you how to follow the way of Jesus? How can you help others to practise following Jesus and encourage them to persevere as followers of Jesus?

Social action idea

Taking care of the environment takes lots of perseverance. We have a Clean Up Australia Day on the first Sunday in March each year. Find out when your national/regional clean up event is and plan to take part. Make sure you do a risk assessment and have the necessary safety gear, i.e. gloves, hats, bags, and have a social time afterwards. Start with a prayer as a commitment to being part of Jesus’ prayer that ‘the kingdom of heaven may come on earth’.

Add value

Mealtime card

- When do you find it hard to show love?
- How do you show love to others?
- Who shows love to you and how?

Question to start and end the session

So... where is love?

Social action idea

Give an item each week to your local food bank.

2



2. Money goes fast

You will need: coins; paper; wax crayons; cards with monetary amounts which can be made up from the available coins (e.g. £1.72 can be made up from £1, 50p, 20p, 2p)

Use the resources to make rubbings of the different values of the coins. You could then cut them out. This activity could be extended into a game. On a table have cards, turned face down, with monetary amounts on them that will take 3–5 coins to make the total. The competitors turn over a card and then race each other (or against a timer) to rub the coins **clearly** to make that total.

Talk about how the son couldn't wait to get his hands on his father's money, and then when he did, he spent it unwisely.

I wonder... if you have ever made an unwise purchase? Or bought something that later you regretted?

1



1. Welcome

You will need: a large sheet of paper (or roll of lining paper); glue; writing/drawing pens; items to stick on for decoration (tissue paper, stars, stickers, etc.)

Use the items provided to create a large, bright welcome banner.

Talk about how the loving Father was so pleased to see his son he ran to greet him and hugged him. This was despite the fact that previously the son couldn't wait to get his hands on his father's money, and then when he did, he spent it unwisely.

I wonder... who are you pleased to see the most? What's the best welcome you have been given or received?

3



3. Loving through it

You will need: a piece of wood (c. 10 cm x 10 cm); nails; a hammer; long lengths of red or pink string/wool; a heart template; a pencil

I wonder... how difficult was it for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to keep their trust in God? How difficult is it for us to keep trusting in God, especially when things are hard?

5



5. Not three but four



You will need: orange, red and yellow jelly, each colour made up and set in different containers; small gingerbread people shapes, either bought ready or made yourself (recipe in support material section); clear plastic cups; spoons

Remember to risk assess for allergies and intolerances.

Take a cup and put a few spoonfuls of the three coloured jellies into it to resemble fire. Take four gingerbread people and put them in the jelly followed by a few more spoonfuls of the jelly.

Talk about how in our Bible story we learn that there was someone in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who protected them from the fire.

I wonder... who do you think the fourth person was? Where had they come from and who sent them?

6



6. Storybox



You will need: a shoebox or similar box filled with items with which to tell the story: e.g. a crown, a gold-covered block with jewel stickers on it, a small musical instrument, four figurines (could be wooden figures, Lego or similar), a paper cup with door cut out and tissue inside to represent flames, rope or cord, flame shapes, a Bible, a small roll of paper tied with ribbon; an abridged copy of the story PDF

Begin to read the story and take out the items to illustrate it. When you have finished, mix up the items on the table. Ask everyone not to look, then take away and cover up one item. Ask everyone to look again and tell you what is missing. Repeat this as often as you choose.

Talk about the different parts of the story. If one part is missing, does it change the story? How?

I wonder... where is God in this story?

7



7. Flame threading

You will need: white paper plates; pencils; a hole punch; orange wool; brown card; glue or sticky tape

8



8. Holy Week garden



You will need: naturally found objects and plants; space outside; props (optional)

It is common for churches to create an 'Easter Garden' with a resurrection theme, but today have a go at creating a Holy Week garden. You could choose to focus on one part of the story (perhaps the garden where Jesus and his disciples went to pray) or the whole story. Use materials already available to you or add in play figures and props which help to tell the story, if you prefer.

Talk about what it would have been like in these places at this time. What would you have seen, heard, smelt?

I wonder... what makes this place so special?

9. Walk and pray



You will need: access to outside space

Remind your Messy Church that Jesus and his friends went out into the garden that night to pray. Invite participants to take their own short prayer walk in the outdoor space around you. Perhaps you may like to pray together as you walk or find a space where you can be alone to pray, just as Jesus did.

Talk about how Jesus was really honest in his prayer, talking to Father God about how he really felt. Have we ever prayed like that?

I wonder... what might you like to talk to God about today?

10. Love in action



You will need: magazines and newspapers; scissors; paper; glue; cameras (optional)

Invite participants to look for images of love in action; what does love look like? Invite them to stick them on to the paper to create a collage together. You could create a second collage at the same time entitled 'courage', finding

images of what courage may look like. Alternatively, you could do a more 'technical' version of this activity, inviting participants to take their own photos of what 'love' or 'courage' looks like and working together to create a slide show of the images.

Talk about how the different images show love or courage in action.

I wonder... what love looks like?

Celebration

You will need one pipe cleaner for each person. Distribute these before you begin.

I wonder what shape love is. Could you make a shape with your pipe cleaner to show 'love'. You can show us if you like. *Invite people to form their shape and hold them up to show, if they are happy to do so, and take a look at some, commenting on what you have: e.g. 'Oh, we have lots of hearts. Oh, what's that one?'*

As I share our story today, I'm going to show you some of the shapes that God used to show us his love. You can make them with your pipe cleaner if you like.

God loves the world very much (*form a heart*). So much, that God sent his Son, Jesus to earth to be born as a baby on that very first Christmas. When Jesus grew up, he told us more about God's love and showed us too. In his last week on earth, he showed us his love in the greatest way possible.

Sometimes love looks like this (*form a tear shape*). When people we love are hurting, it can make us sad too. *Be careful about the wording here to avoid any suggestion that people who love us should cause us pain!*

Jesus looked out across the city he loved, and he cried. The people God loves so much had walked so far away from him, and Jesus knew he had to do something very courageous to put things right again.

Sometimes love looks like this (*form a table shape*); a meal around a table with family and friends is a great way to share love and spend time with those people who are special to us. Jesus had a special meal with his closest friends. He told them more about what would happen to him, and why he would do this. They didn't really understand at this time, but they would do...

Sometimes love looks like this (*form a flower shape*). People often give flowers to those they love, don't they? After the meal, Jesus went outside into the garden to pray. He needed to be close to Father God and talk to him about

Session material: May

Community: a home for all

by the Messy Church Conference 2025 planning team



SUPPORT MATERIAL



MESSY CHURCH AT HOME



MESSY CHURCH GOES WILD

Bible story for prep

1 Corinthians 12:12–27 (MSG)

You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts – limbs, organs, cells – but no matter how many parts you can name, you’re still one body. It’s exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which *he* has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptised.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain – his Spirit – where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves – labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free – are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn’t just a single part blown up into something huge. It’s all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together. If Foot said, ‘I’m not elegant like Hand, embellished with rings; I guess I don’t belong to this body,’ would that make it so? If Ear said, ‘I’m not beautiful like Eye, transparent and expressive; I don’t deserve a place on the head,’ would you want to remove it from the body? If the body was all eye, how could it hear? If all ear, how could it smell? As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.

But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance. For no matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a *part* of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn’t be a body, but a monster. What we have is one

body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, ‘Get lost; I don’t need you’? Or, Head telling Foot, ‘You’re fired; your job has been phased out’? As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way – the ‘lower’ the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary. You can live without an eye, for instance, but not without a stomach. When it’s a part of your own body you are concerned with, it makes *no* difference whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower. You give it dignity and honour just as it is, without comparisons. If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher. If you had to choose, wouldn’t you prefer good digestion to full-bodied hair?

The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don’t, the parts we see and the parts we don’t. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

You are Christ’s body – that’s who you are! You must never forget this.

Pointers

The apostle Paul uses the image of a human body more than once in his letters to help his readers understand how the church should work. Our bodies are made up of many different parts, each with their own particular functions and vital contribution to the overall health of a person. Some of these parts are very visible and, superficially at least, seem to be more significant, but in fact our hidden organs and blood vessels beneath the skin are just as important, if not more so. Paul transfers these ideas to illustrate how every single person is important and has a part to play in making Christ known.

Pointers

God can use us, no matter how old we are. We can share Jesus' love by being loving or point to Jesus through the way we live our lives. In his old age, Moses was specially selected by God to do an important task. God has a purpose for us all. God used a burning bush to get Moses' attention so that he would hear what God had in mind. How will God share his purpose for you to you?

How does this session help people grow in Christ?

- The session helps us all to see that God is active in our lives and will use us to further God's kingdom if we are ready and willing.

Add value

Mealttime card

- Have you ever received a message you felt was from God?
- I wonder what God's purpose is for you?
- Which of your gifts and skills do you think God might use?

Question to start and end the session

So... Moses was quite old when he saw the burning bush. What do you think he felt and thought? What ways might God use you?

Social action idea

Sell cakes to raise money for Amnesty International or another charity important to your Messy Church.

Activities

1



1. Shining the light

You will need: a large piece of black cardboard or cardboard painted black (with sections cut out like a stained-glass window); tissue paper; glue; tape

Use tissue paper to fill the spaces to design a stained-glass window.

Talk about how God used a bright flame in a burning bush to get the attention of Moses. God gave Moses a task and then Moses shined the love of God to a whole nation.

I wonder... how do you shine God's love for others to see?

2



2. Burning bush



You will need: the PDF template; green pencils or crayons; yellow and orange paint

Use the green pencils/crayons to add leaves and then the paint to add flames to the bush template.

Celebration

The celebration is based on the Bible passage found in Matthew 5:13–16.

You will need: someone dressed up as a saltshaker (this could be as simple as getting someone to hold a bottle of salt or as complicated as creating a cardboard cut-out of a saltshaker for them to wear); someone dressed up as a light (again, this can be as simple or as complicated as desired); someone as a ‘bouncer’; a bowl; mobile phone lights or torches; battery-powered tealights.

Read the Bible passage as summarised below. As you are reading, the salt and light people should be moving as directed by the passage.

You are the salt of the earth. The salt comes up on to the stage near the storyteller.

But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? The storyteller and the salt try to taste the salt – lick finger – it tastes of nothing. Both pull a face.

It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. Get a ‘bouncer’ to come and usher the salt off the stage.

You are the light of the world. The light comes up on to the stage near the storyteller.

A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. The ‘bouncer’ tries to put a bowl on the lights head.

Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. The light twirls around and gives battery tealights to everyone.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

You see, we are called to be SALT and LIGHT in the world. To be light in the dark places that we face. To be salt and help more people to know who Jesus is.

I wonder...

- How can we be salt and light in our communities?
- What was your favourite part of the story and why?

Prayer

Ask everyone to lift their candles up as you say a prayer.

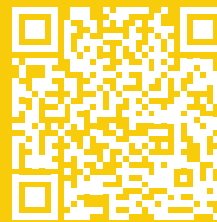
Lord, thank you that you have called us to be hope in your world. Help us to be salt and light to those we meet this week. Amen.

Song suggestions

- ‘City on a hill’ – Nick and Becky Drake (Worship for Everyone)
- ‘Let your light shine’ – Hillsong Kids
- ‘This little light of mine’ – Go Fish
- ‘Shine (from the inside out)’ – Spring Harvest
- ‘We are one’ – Mark and Helen Johnson (Out of the Ark Music)
- ‘Take care of the world’ – iSingPOP

Meal suggestions

Fish fingers and chips (with the option of adding salt), followed by jelly and ice cream.



**Scan to download
the PDF support
material from our
website**



Session material: August

Patience: wait for it!

By Anne Offler and Sharon Pritchard



SUPPORT MATERIAL



MESSY CHURCH AT HOME



MESSY CHURCH GOES WILD

Bible story for prep

Genesis 8:1–19 (MSG)

Then God turned his attention to Noah and all the wild animals and farm animals with him on the ship. God caused the wind to blow and the floodwaters began to go down. The underground springs were shut off, the windows of Heaven closed and the rain quit. Inch by inch the water lowered. After 150 days the worst was over.

On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ship landed on the Ararat mountain range. The water kept going down until the tenth month. On the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains came into view. After forty days Noah opened the window that he had built into the ship.

He sent out a raven; it flew back and forth waiting for the floodwaters to dry up. Then he sent a dove to check on the flood conditions, but it couldn't even find a place to perch – water still covered the Earth. Noah reached out and caught it, brought it back into the ship.

He waited seven more days and sent out the dove again. It came back in the evening with a freshly picked olive leaf in its beak. Noah knew that the flood was about finished.

He waited another seven days and sent the dove out a third time. This time it didn't come back.

In the six-hundred-first year of Noah's life, on the first day of the first month, the flood had dried up. Noah opened the hatch of the ship and saw dry ground. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the Earth was completely dry.

God spoke to Noah: 'Leave the ship, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives. And take all the animals with you, the whole menagerie of birds and mammals and crawling creatures, all that swarming extravagance of life, so they can reproduce and flourish on the Earth.'

Noah disembarked with his sons and wife and his sons' wives. Then all the animals, crawling

creatures, birds – every creature on the face of the Earth – left the ship family by family.

Pointers

- Noah waited, and waited, and waited some more. He had already waited 150 days for the rain to stop. When it did, he still had to wait. What he wanted – to get off the ark – was not possible straight away. The earth had to dry out to enable him, his family and all the animals to live on it.
- Noah sent out a raven and then a dove. Both confirmed there was still more waiting to be done – another seven days!
- Finally, the dove came back with the branch which was the sign that all was ready. But still Noah had had to be patient, because he did not know how long it would be before they could leave the ark. Even when the rain stopped, he had to be patient while the earth dried out.
- We have to wait for many things today – a special event, a date or time to be reached, things to be ready. Just like Noah, often there are things we cannot hurry. We just have to be patient and wait.
- Are we calmly patient or is our waiting done in a state of agitation?

How does this session help people grow in Christ?

We hope to grow in patience as we see that in some situations we have to wait. We wait for events or for people to be able to understand or do something. We practise waiting calmly rather than in a state of agitation, and we think of others around us as we appreciate their waiting too.

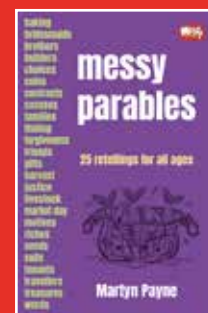
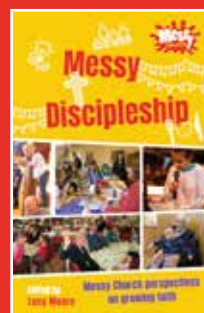
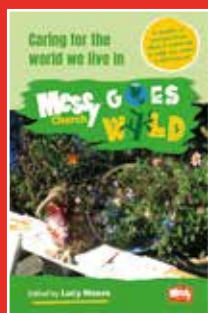
Add value:

Mealtime card

- What kinds of things are you good at waiting for?
- What is the longest time you have had to wait for?

Get Messy! contains twelve session outlines for Messy Churches, running through the year from September to August.

Everything you need to run your Messy Church, including activity photos, mealtime cards, social action ideas and templates, all downloadable from the Messy Church website. With an introduction by Aike Kennett-Brown.



Find these and other Messy Church resources at brtonline.org.uk



messychurch.org.uk